



RI Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5094

www.health.ri.gov

Interim Health Advisory

Date: August 26, 2009
To: All Healthcare Providers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in RI

Rhode Island: 203 confirmed positive cases, 76 hospitalized to date, 3 deaths
National Report: 53 states (including DC, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands) with 7,983 hospitalized cases, 522 deaths

Recommended use of antiviral medications

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently issued guidelines for the use of antiviral medications to treat patients infected with H1N1. The guidelines emphasize using oseltamivir and zanamivir to prevent serious illness and deaths, reduce the need for hospitalization, and reduce the duration of hospital stays. Antiviral medications are recommended for patients with severe illness or rapid deterioration, as well as for high-risk children and adults. Healthy, non-pregnant adults and children with uncomplicated illness generally do not need to be treated with antiviral medications. To read the complete WHO guidance, please see http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/notes/h1n1_use_antivirals_20090820/en/index.html. To read the current CDC guidance on antiviral medications, please see <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>.

HEALTH will report the prevalence of dominant influenza strains throughout the 2009/2010 influenza season using the weekly provider briefing. H1N1 is currently the only circulating influenza strain.

Influenza planning for medical offices and outpatient facilities

The CDC has developed 10 "Action Steps" for medical offices and outpatient facilities preparing for an increased demand for services during an influenza outbreak. The planning steps include information about developing a business continuity plan, caring for patients who present with influenza-like illness (ILI), and protecting healthcare personnel during an influenza outbreak. To read the planning guidance, please see <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/10steps.htm>.

Adult seasonal influenza vaccine

Adult seasonal influenza vaccine is available and is being distributed through HEALTH's Adult Influenza Vaccination Program. Vaccine providers should start vaccinating adults for seasonal influenza **as soon as they receive initial vaccine shipments**. Waiting until late fall to administer seasonal vaccine is no longer recommended. To enroll in the adult program, please see <http://www.health.ri.gov/immunization/immunizeforlife.php>.

H1N1 vaccine update

H1N1 vaccination efforts are expected to begin in October and continue through November and December. Pregnant women and children will be prioritized to receive the vaccine when it first becomes available. HEALTH is currently developing an H1N1 vaccine distribution plan. When plan details are confirmed, HEALTH will post them on the website and share them with providers.

in the weekly provider briefing. HEALTH is also planning a public education campaign that will include printed educational materials. Future provider briefings will contain more information about these materials.

H1N1 email address

Providers can continue to use the H1N1 email address to communicate directly with HEALTH during the 2009/2010 influenza season: h1n1@health.ri.gov.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- WHO at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>